

# LICENSED CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

---

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

---



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I

EARNING A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK DEGREE

---

## PART II

BECOMING AN ASSOCIATE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

---

## PART III

GAINING SUPERVISED EXPERIENCE

LCSW BREAKDOWN OF REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

---

## PART IV

APPLYING TO TAKE THE EXAMS

---

# PART I

---

## EARNING A MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK DEGREE

Earning a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from an accredited school of social work is your first step toward becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in California. There is more to come, however, and this handbook from the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) will guide you through the process.

### Accepting your degree

For the BBS to accept your degree, it must be earned at an accredited school of social work. You can verify your school's accreditation on the BBS Web site, [www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/lcs\\_schools.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/lcs_schools.shtml).

### Completing pre-licensure coursework

The BBS requires you to complete certain additional coursework before applying to take the LCSW exams. You can complete this coursework as part of your MSW degree or afterward, while you are earning the required hours of supervised work experience.

**TIP:** You can find a list of specific courses that meet these requirements on the BBS Web site. Go to [www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/lcs\\_schools.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/lcs_schools.shtml), find your school, and select “Additional Courses Required.”

### **The requirements are:**

- Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting - seven hours.
- Human Sexuality - 10 hours.
- Substance Abuse and Dependency - 15 hours.
- Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection, and Intervention - 15 hours.
- Aging and Long-Term Care - 10 hours.

**NOTE:** Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection, and Intervention hours can be any amount if you began your degree program before January 1, 2004.

**NOTE:** Aging and Long-Term Care coursework is not required if you began your degree program before January 1, 2004.

**TIP:** Keep the course description and/or syllabus for any course you took that you believe fulfilled the requirements. The BBS may need the materials to verify the course content.

### **You can take these required courses from:**

- State, county, or other government entities.
- Accredited colleges or universities.
- BBS-approved continuing education providers (A list of BBS-approved continuing education providers is on the BBS Web site at [www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml).)

# PART II

## BECOMING AN ASSOCIATE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER (ASW)

After graduation, you will need to apply to become an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW) before you can begin accumulating your required pre-licensure supervised work experience hours. An ASW application packet can be downloaded from the “Forms and Publications” section of the BBS Web site ([www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml).)

### **Before submitting the completed ASW application packet, be sure it contains the following:**

- The completed one-page application.
- A check or money order for \$75.
- A copy of your official transcripts in your school’s sealed envelope. (Make sure the school includes the date it conferred your degree.)
- A completed Live Scan form. (Keep a copy for your records.)

### **Important reminder**

You cannot begin accruing hours toward licensure until the BBS issues you an ASW registration number. Once issued, your ASW number will be posted on the BBS Web site. Seven to 10 business days later, you should receive a packet in the mail with a letter, forms, and your ASW registration certificate. Pay attention to the letter; it will note any coursework you may need to complete.

**TIP:** Find out if you have been issued an ASW registration number by looking up your name on the BBS Web site. Go to: [www.bbs.ca.gov/quick\\_links/weblookup.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/quick_links/weblookup.shtml).

# PART III

---

## GAINING QUALIFYING EXPERIENCE

Once you are registered as an ASW, you can begin accruing the required hours of experience to qualify for the licensing examinations. You will need 104 weeks of supervision and 3,200 hours of supervised work experience.

### **Some tips to simplify the process:**

- Always renew your ASW registration number on time. Submit your renewal fee at least six weeks before the expiration date to ensure your registration does not expire. Hours earned under an expired ASW registration will not count.
- Keep track of your supervision documents, including Responsibility Statements, Supervisory Plans, and Clinical Social Work Experience Verification forms. Be sure all forms are completed and signed. You will need to submit the forms with original signatures when you apply for examination eligibility.
- Meet with your supervisor every week for at least one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision. Your work experience in a given week will not count unless you meet this requirement.
- Review the LCSW Breakdown of Required Experience on the next page so you will know which areas to focus on.

- Use the BBS Experience Calculator to determine how close you are to finishing your hours of work experience. You can access the calculator on the BBS Web site ([www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/exp\\_calc.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/app-reg/exp_calc.shtml)).
- Familiarize yourself with the definition of psychotherapy as it relates to clinical social work. This is defined in Business and Professions Code Section 4996.9 and in the glossary of this handbook.

### **Remember the six-year rule**

All work experience must be accrued no more than six years before the date the BBS receives your application for examination eligibility. For example, if the BBS received your application on April 3, 2006, only the experience gained between April 3, 2000, and April 3, 2006, would count.

### **Contact the BBS for help**

If you have additional questions, call an LCSW/ASW Evaluator at (916) 574-7851 or (916) 574-7852, or e-mail your questions to [bbswebmaster@bbs.ca.gov](mailto:bbswebmaster@bbs.ca.gov). Have your file number or registration number available for faster service.



## LCSW Breakdown of Required Experience

Experience Type	Number of Hours	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clinical Psychosocial Diagnosis</li> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Treatment</li> <li>Psychotherapy</li> <li>Counseling</li> </ul>	<p>Minimum: 2,000 hours; 750 of those hours must be in face-to-face individual or group psychotherapy.</p> <p>Maximum: None</p>	Two hours of direct supervisor contact is required for any week in which more than 10 hours of face-to-face psychotherapy is performed for each setting which experience is gained.*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client-centered Advocacy</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Evaluation</li> <li>Research</li> </ul>	<p>Minimum: None</p> <p>Maximum: 1,200 hours</p>	
Supervision, Individual	<p>Minimum: 52 weeks; 13 of those hours must be supervised by an LCSW.</p> <p>Maximum: None</p>	One hour of direct supervisor contact is required for a minimum of 104 weeks. No more than five hours of supervision may be credited in a single week.**
Supervision, Group (No more than eight in group)	<p>Minimum: None</p> <p>Maximum: None</p>	See note above.**
Total Weeks of Experience Required	<p>Minimum: 104 weeks</p> <p>Maximum: None</p>	
Total Hours of Experience Required	3,200 hours**	A maximum of 40 hours may be credited for any week.

### Footnotes:

\* An hour of direct supervisor contact equals one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision.

\*\* A minimum of 1,700 hours must be under the supervision of an LCSW. Source: Business and Professions Code Section 4996.23.

# PART IV

---

## APPLYING TO TAKE THE EXAMS

After you complete your work experience and additional coursework, you may apply to take the examinations. You will need to pass the Standard Written Examination and the Written Clinical Vignette Examination before you are eligible to receive your license.

All examination related items are on the BBS Web site ([www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml)).

The BBS will notify you by mail once your application is approved. Approximately two weeks later, you will receive the LCSW Standard Written Examination Candidate Handbook in the mail. The candidate handbook is your official study guide. Your deadline for taking the exam will be printed on the back of the handbook. The LCSW Standard Written Examination Candidate Handbook and the LCSW Clinical Vignette Candidate Handbook are also available on the BBS Web site ([www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/forms.shtml)).

**TIP:** If you continue to work, even as a volunteer, during the examination process, you must be supervised. You cannot practice independently unless you are licensed by the BBS.

### **If you do not pass an exam:**

You will have up to a year to retake any examination you do not pass. To retake an exam, you must submit an LCSW Examination/Re-Examination form, along with the \$100 fee. You must wait 6 months to retake an exam.

**TIP:** Keep track of your deadline for taking or retaking the examination. If you miss the deadline, you will have to apply for examination and pay the fee again.

### **If you pass the Standard Written Examination:**

You may apply to take the LCSW Written Clinical Vignette Examination. Submit the LCSW Examination/Re-Examination form with the \$100 fee.

### **If you pass the Written Clinical Vignette Examination:**

Personnel at the test site will give you an application for your LCSW initial license. Complete the application and mail it to the BBS with your fee. (See your Written Clinical Vignette Examination Candidate Handbook for the specific fee amount.)

### **Congratulations!**

Your license number will be posted on the BBS Web site before you receive your certificates in the mail. To find out if a license has been issued, check the BBS Web site at [www.bbs.ca.gov/quick\\_links/weblookup](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/quick_links/weblookup). The BBS will mail you an engraved wall license along with your smaller license certificate shortly after license issuance.

**TIP:** Now that you're an LCSW, be sure to read the *BBS News* and visit the BBS Web site regularly to stay up-to-date on continuing education requirements and other important topics.

# GLOSSARY:

**BBS News** – The bi-annual newsletter published by the BBS. This publication is mailed to all active licensees and registrants in addition to being available on the BBS Web site.

**Direct supervisor contact** – Direct supervisor contact can be either one hour of individual supervision or two hours of group supervision. The two hours of group supervision must be obtained within the same week.

**LCSW/ASW Evaluator** - An employee at the BBS responsible for processing ASW registration applications, examination eligibility applications, and answering questions and emails relating to LCSW licensing requirements.

**Live Scan** – A fingerprinting process in which applicants roll their fingers across a computer pad. Typically, results are processed much quicker than traditional fingerprinting processes.

**Psychotherapy** – Psychotherapy, within the meaning of Chapter 14 (Social Workers) of the Business and Professions Code, is the use of psychosocial methods within a professional relationship, to assist the person or persons to achieve a better psychosocial adaptation, to acquire greater human realization of psychosocial potential and adaptation, to modify internal and external conditions which affect individuals, groups, or communities in respect to behavior, emotions, and thinking, in respect to their intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. Source: Business and Professions Code Section 4996.9.

Please note that this information is intended only as a general reference. The BBS encourages you to thoroughly read the laws and regulations relating to licensure for licensed clinical social workers. Please consult the laws beginning at Sections 4991 of the California Business and Professions Code and the regulations beginning with Section 1800 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations. The laws and regulations are available on the Board's Web site at [www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/lawsregs.pdf](http://www.bbs.ca.gov/pdf/publications/lawsregs.pdf).

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. A light beige or cream-colored shaded area is visible along the bottom edge, suggesting a shadow or a design element. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

## NOTES:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. At the bottom of the page, there is a decorative wavy border in a light beige or cream color. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery or notebook paper.

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. A light beige or cream-colored shaded area is visible along the bottom edge, suggesting a shadow or a design element. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



**BOARD OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES**

1625 NORTH MARKET BLVD., SUITE S-200

SACRAMENTO, CA 95834

(916) 574-7830

TDD: (916) 322-1700

[www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)